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LETTERS

TO THE

REV. DR. PRIESTLEY,

BY J. PROUD.



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A
CANDID AND IMPARTIAL
R E P L Y
TO THE
REV. DR. PRIESTLEY'S LETTERS,
ADDRESSED BY HIM
To the Members of the New Jerusalem.

IN WHICH HIS OBJECTIONS ARE FAIRLY CONSIDERED,
AND THE
DOCTRINES
CONTAINED IN THE THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF THE
Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg,
VINDICATED
From Reason and Scripture.

BY J. PROUD, N.H.M.

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REPLY

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DR. J. P. LEECH

• 1145 YB 64228 P 04.1

For the benefit of the poor.

IN WHICH THE COLLECTIONS ARE VALUED FOR INDEXED.

ENT TO COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE

1870



BY F. B. ROUSE, R. H. M.

1901.

1711-1712

THE PREFACE.

AS the Rev. Dr. Priestley has thought good to address a few Letters to us, who stile ourselves Members of the New Jerusalem, it will, I presume, be expected that we make a Reply. This, by the request of my friends in the same interest, I have attempted; with what success must be left to the judgment of my readers. We have all reason to lament that such a diversity of opinion prevails in the christian world; and especially so, inasmuch as the divinity of the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is positively denied by many. To assert that that Divine Being who is our Saviour, Redeemer, Creator, our King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, is no more than a mere man, is an error of the first magnitude; and to declare that it is idolatry, and a great abomination to worship him, is truly shocking to a christian mind. But we hope the time is coming when all sincere pious minds
will

will worship the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and him only; as being the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in one divine person. This is the God, and the only God, we adore, worship, and serve, being convinced from reason and scripture that there is no other. Upon this important subject, with many others, we differ very widely from Dr. Priestley, and his Unitarian brethren. And it is very probable, all we can say in favor of our views, however true they may be, will have but little weight with our opponents; for when men have confirmed themselves in a religious tenet, it is not a very easy matter to convince them it is an error. Nor do I conceive that religious controversies, and disputations of this public kind, have in general any very good tendency.

For this reason it is that I engage in this work with reluctance, and also that I take the liberty of saying, should Dr. Priestley write again, my intention is to make no further reply. I can with much more freedom recommend the reading of those writings, which too many have deemed unsound and extravagant, but which, I am convinced, do solidly and scripturally answer those who object to our sentiments; I mean the writings of that highly-illuminated servant of the Lord, the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg.

Never-

Nevertheless, I trust I shall ever be ready to avow the doctrines I maintain, and willing to defend them, whenever it is necessary so to do. As Dr. Priestley has thought good to oppose them, and as we consider him a gentleman of learning, of great abilities as a philosopher, and much regarded as a divine, it was thought necessary to defend our sentiments in this instance. And as I am conscious I have replied in good-nature, without the least design to offend, so I hope no one person of his opinions will find themselves hurt or offended. Let us all be willing to bear what may be said on each side of the question; make a candid, impartial, and scriptural judgment; and accede to truth, wherever we find it: and as christians manifest to all, that goodness of heart, charity, kindness, and affection, with that truly upright, useful, and christian life, which the doctrines and precepts of the holy word so uniformly recommend. For let our opinions or our profession be what they may, we all know, that without such a life they will be of no advantage. Love to the one true God, charity towards all mankind, and obedience to the divine will, are not only the grand essentials, but also the sum and substance of all true religion.

Sincerely

Sincerely wishing that every one may practise what they know of truth; that those who oppose it may receive it; that those who receive the truth, may live in conformity to it; and that the time may soon appear when all christians shall be of one heart, one mind, and one life.

I remain a friend and well-wisher to all.



J. P.

Birmingham, Nov. 14, 1791.

LETTERS

LETTERS
TO THE
REV. DR. PRIESTLEY.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

AS you have thought good to address a few Letters to the Members of the New Jerusalem; as those Letters are written in a *friendly, candid, and respectful style*; and as they are addressed to us by a gentleman, a scholar, and a minister of such acknowledged abilities, we think ourselves under considerable obligations to take particular notice of them, and return as candid and friendly a reply.

And as I had the honor of opening the Temple in Birmingham, of which you make mention, and am the stated minister there; had also the favor of your company, and am one of those with whom you conversed concerning the doctrines we maintain, it seems expedient for me to be concerned in giving you a reply; as well as that my friends in the same interest have requested I would take that work upon

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me.

me. But I very sincerely assure you I am not fond of *controversy*—it gives me *no pleasure* to engage in religious disputations, especially in this public manner; nor do I think myself equal with Dr. *Priestley* in that province. However, I hope to be nearly equal with him in *friendship* and *christian love*, without which it will be of little consequence what doctrines we maintain, or system we espouse.

As to your remarks, in your Preface, respecting the Riots at Birmingham, and your severe treatment there, I have but little to say in this place—I will only observe, that every humane heart must deeply feel for the loss and distress of Dr. *Priestley* and his friends, with any others who had a share in those sufferings. But I must candidly own, I cannot impute those execrable and destructive proceedings to “men of *private virtue, honor, and justice* ;” or to the real *members* of the *Church of England*—but rather to a lawless abandoned mob, made up of boys, men, and women of the *very lowest class, uncultivated, unprincipled, notoriously wicked*, and scarcely deserving the name of *rational beings*. I cannot believe that any *real members* of the Church of England, in Birmingham, or elsewhere, would be guilty of, or give countenance to, a deed so vile and infernal as that of the fourteenth of July. A more *liberal* and *generous spirit*, I believe, at this day pervades the members of the establishment; and if any member of that church, in this town, did indiscreetly say a word, or do a deed, that might give the least encouragement to the violent transactions of the
mob



mob (though I know not of any such person) I am persuaded they must most severely regret it, when they saw what was done. I can no more think that the real members of the Church of England would persecute any body of Dissenters in the kingdom, than I can think any Dissenters would persecute them. I hope the spirit of persecution has subsided, and that all denominations of professing christians will live in amity and friendship with each other; and I should be happy to find that nothing more is done or said, on either side, to *increase* the disaffection between the Presbyterian and the Churchman, in the town of Birmingham; but rather, that every thing possible might be done and said, to conciliate the differences, and unite man to man in friendship and affection.

But, to return to that part of your Preface which more immediately respects us, as a people, you begin, Sir, with saying, p. 12, "It may appear
 " not a little extraordinary, that a scheme of religion so *visionary*, and so destitute of all *rational evidence*, as that of Baron Swedenborg, should be
 " so firmly believed by such numbers of persons of
 " unquestionable good sense, and the most upright
 " intentions." We are obliged by your good opinion of our sense and uprightness; but if the scheme be so *visionary*, and *destitute of ALL RATIONAL EVIDENCE*, as you suppose it to be, however upright our intentions are, we give but little proof of *good sense* by espousing it—neither will the judicious part of mankind give us much credit for good sense or

found judgment, although Dr. Priestley himself has done us that honor. Whether our scheme of religion be without all *rational evidence*, remains to be considered—we are far from believing *that* is proved as yet. If there be “nothing so improbable in itself, “but what persons of a certain turn of mind may be “pre-disposed to believe,” I hope we shall not rank among persons of that character, as it would do us no credit. Yet it appears to me, that notwithstanding all our good sense, Dr. Priestley has, in his judgment, classed us with persons of that description.

I confess, Sir, I do not understand what you mean in the 13th page of your Preface, where you say, “They who already believe in the inspiration “of some persons, will easily admit that of others, “who, in their idea, carry on the same scheme, or “one similar to it. Thus the miracles of the popish “saints were received without much difficulty, after “those of the apostles and primitive christians.”—From this passage one would be led to suppose that Dr. Priestley admits of, or believes in, no inspiration at all; because, if he does, he is among those he speaks of, who will *easily admit that of others*—consequently, he may be quite as susceptible of imposition as we are. But, if Dr. Priestley will admit of *no inspiration*, then the prophets and apostles must all be as great impostors as Mahomet, their miracles all deception, and their mission *assumed*.

To compare the Hon. E. Swedenborg with the author of the Alcoran, appears too much like an attempt to prejudice the minds of your readers
against

against him, before they read what you have advanced, that so *your objections* to him and his doctrines may be the more readily believed; inasmuch as we well know, all christians justly entertain an aversion to Mahomet and his Alcoran. If, therefore, they can be prevailed upon to believe that Mahomet and the Swede are upon a level, the work is done! His writings will not be read—his followers will be despised—his mission denied—and his doctrines condemned. But it is one thing to rank them together, and a quite different one to prove that they *deserve* so to be.

You wonder, Sir, at the strength of our faith, because you do not find we pretend to any other person having similar communications with God and the invisible world, in confirmation of his.—Why, Sir, if two, three, or twenty more persons were found, I presume this would have little weight with you, as you would suppose them all equally deceived: however, more of this hereafter. We shall endeavour to prove that other persons have had similar communications, and also to establish our doctrines by more than one witness.

As to the Quaker's trance, vision, or dream, I have nothing to do with; and, as you say it was *intirely unlike* any of the Baron's memorable relations, it certainly has nothing to do with *them*, nor *our cause*. And as to "vision against vision, or "dream against dream, and which of these are we "to believe?" I answer, *either*, or *neither*, in proportion as you are convinced of their truth or false-

hood ; as we have no desire to direct any man what he is to believe, any farther than reason and fair argument may convince him.

We perfectly agree with you, " that *reasoning* " requires no support from testimony," and we wish no man to believe *facts*, any farther than the evidence in their favor appears conclusive and substantial. In this we agree.

But, Sir, I cannot help concluding, that although, in the beginning of your Preface, you compliment us as men of *evident good sense* ; you do, in reality, believe we are men of *warm and extravagant imaginations*, with *little reflexion*, and *shallow judgment*. And, if such, the public will the more wonder, that the judicious and able Dr. Priestley should attempt to reason with us on religious subjects, or convince us of the fallacy of that system we have espoused. As there is nothing more of importance in your Preface, but what I shall have occasion to notice in my observations upon your Letters, I shall conclude this by assuring you of my real esteem, and high opinion of your superior abilities ; and that, in perfect good-nature, friendship, and affection, I shall, if Providence permit, attempt an answer to each of your Letters, in their order.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

YOU acknowledge us as fellow christians; that we value christianity as much as yourself; and that the frankness with which we avow our principles does us honor, opposite as they are to those which generally prevail in the christian world. It is true, Sir, we highly value pure christianity, as a religion taught us by the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour; and it is our fixed determined design, never, knowingly, to embrace any religious doctrine or sentiment contrary to, or that is not founded in, the pure word of God. And we hold it right to avow our principles in the most open and unequivocal manner, being assured that *truth* will ever bear the light, and be the more valued the more fully it is known. "We are sensible that many corruptions have been introduced into christianity, which have so much disfigured it, that it can hardly be known; and that the world requires to be in a manner re-christianized." We agree with you, Sir, in most or all you have said, down to the bottom of the 3d page of your first Letter; therefore those pages need not be repeated here.

You express your surprise at our being so un-charitable as to admit none into heaven, but those

who think as we do, with respect to the person of Christ; and in proof of our uncharitableness, you quote a passage from Emanuel Swedenborg's Doctrine concerning the Lord, p. 230, with p. 424 of his Universal Theology.

I wish, Sir, you had, in this instance, attended to two things—first, that you had given the words of Emanuel Swedenborg, *just as they are*, in the passage referred to; and, second, that you had considered those words in connexion with the whole subject. We are by no means so uncharitable as to suppose none will go to heaven, but those who think in this life just as we do, concerning the Lord Jesus. Neither does Emanuel Swedenborg say any such thing. We believe every one, who is truly principled in *goodness*, and consequently lives a good life, will go to heaven. But we believe that no person will actually enter into heaven, until *all evil* in his will, principle, or affections, be subdued or cast out, and all false doctrines be removed from his understanding, viz. that he can only enter as a form of goodness and truth, or love and wisdom; as nothing that is *evil* or *false* can find admission there. And in the same *number* of the Universal Theology, p. 795, Emanuel Swedenborg says, “Those who do not acknowledge the Lord” (that is, after death) “are *under* heaven, and are “there *instructed*; they who receive him *after* instruction, are taken up into heaven: but they “who do not receive him, are cast into hell. Of “this number are they, WHO LIKE the Socinians
“have

“ have approached God the Father alone ; or *who* “ *like* the Arians, have denied the divinity of the “ Lord’s humanity.” By which he means, most obviously, those who in this life have had a faith similar to the Socinians and Arians, and at the same time are in such a state of confirmation in *evil and falsehood*, as after death not to be capable of receiving the Lord. By receiving, or acknowledging the Lord, Emanuel Swedenborg means a *heart acknowledgment*, which is to believe in him, love him, and do his will. So that men are not cast into hell merely for being Socinians or Arians, as to principle, in this life, but as having so connected evil of life with the falsehood of faith, as to be incapable of instruction and heavenly blessedness in the life to come.

I am sorry, Sir, you should have so much mistaken our principles, as to suppose we are destitute of *charity*. I know it is but too common, for one denomination of christians to think another uncharitable ; but the essential principles upon which all our doctrines are founded, are *love to God*, and *charity to man*—and we are so far from condemning any man on account of his particular faith, or opinion, that we do most firmly believe, every one who lives a *good life* will be saved, although his opinions here may be diametrically opposite to our own.

In the remaining part of your Letter, you only recite some of those sentiments which we maintain, without animadverting upon them ; and as I see nothing therein improperly stated, it is not necessary

fary for me to make any observations further upon this Letter.

I therefore proceed to your *second*, in the beginning of which you say, "The system exhibited in the preceding Letter must be acknowledged to be *new*, and very extraordinary, differing materially from the faith of every other denomination of christians."

I allow the system appears to christians in general, *new* and *extraordinary*, and that it does very materially differ from their present faith; but that the system is *in itself* new, or extraordinary, we cannot so easily allow. Suppose some philosopher or politician had, a thousand years ago, established a system of philosophy or politics, and the system were then made known, and received universally through the nation; but in a few centuries the people, for want of attending to it, and being regardless of it, intirely lost all knowledge concerning it, and Dr. Priestley, in the present age, revived that system, published it, and made it known to the nation—in this case, it might be *new* and *extraordinary* to *them*, but it would not be so *in itself*. And if it can be proved that the doctrines and truths of this dispensation are essentially the same as those taught by the holy word in all ages, then what extraordinary evidence can be necessary for their confirmation?

But, Sir, you seem to confound the particular communications made to Emanuel Swedenborg, with the doctrines and truths delivered in his writings. Not but I allow it is necessary for us to be
rationally

rationally convinced those communications were made to him, before we pretend to believe them. You seem, Sir, to lay a wonderful stress upon the working of miracles, or foretelling future events. But are we not liable to be deceived even with respect to these? Did the miracles which Moses wrought convince Pharaoh that the God of Israel was the true God, or prevail upon him to let Israel go from Egypt? No, rather, it was what he and his land suffered in consequence of those miracles, which induced him so to do. Did all the miracles which Moses wrought in the sight of the Israelites, both in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, operate in the real good of that people? We know they did not. Did the miracles which Jesus Christ performed convince the Jews that he was the Messiah? Was he generally believed in on that account? It seems not. Is it not said, John xii. 37, *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* And in Matt. xiii. 58, *And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* And Abraham truly says, *If ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye be convinced though one rose from the dead.* Is it not evident, that the plain solid truths which our Lord and his apostles delivered, made a thousand times more proselytes (independent of miracles) than all the miracles that were wrought? Nor do I think there is much propriety in saying, "The former dispensations of religion required to be established by miracles," or were so established.

It

It seems much more evident and rational, that they were established on *the divine truth of God*. And as to foretelling future events, at the commencement of a new dispensation, in order to confirm the truth of it, this can have but little weight with a thinking intelligent mind; nay, there is a manifest inconsistency in it: because future events can only be known when that future time arrives, and therefore nothing can be determined till the actual accomplishment. But, in the present case, as a considerable number of years have elapsed since the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg were published to the world, we have it in our power to prove, in the fullest and most unexceptionable manner, that he actually did foretell many singular things, which have been certainly fulfilled according to his predictions.

But these are things which *we* lay no stress upon, nor consider as evidences or proofs of his mission, and therefore have given ourselves no concern about their being published to the world. Yet, Sir, there is one circumstance which I think it right to notice here, though it is in your 7th Letter, p. 54; you say, "Though he" (Emanuel Swedenborg) "visited not only the moon, and the "planets of our system, but also various planets "belonging to other suns, he says nothing of that "which has lately been discovered by Dr. Herschell. Had that planet no existence at that "time? This does not look like inspiration!"—Now, Sir, had you read his Origin of the Earth, or a note in the 10th number of the Magazine of Knowledge

Knowledge concerning Heaven and Hell, &c. you would have seen that Emanuel Swedenborg knew of that planet, which at a later date Dr. Herschell discovered. "Emanuel Swedenborg's treatise on the Origin of the Earth, was published in Latin, in the year 1745, and it was not till the year 1781 that Dr. Herschell discovered it. And as Baron Swedenborg was not in the habit of making actual observations, not being provided with the instruments necessary for that purpose, it is highly probable that he received his information of a seventh primary planet, from the spiritual world; the truth of which has since been confirmed by the astronomical observations of Dr. Herschell."

But to return. It does not appear then that miracles are necessary to *establish* a dispensation, divine truth alone being its foundation, and therefore we see no wonderful propriety or beauty in your simile of a cottage standing upon a rock, and a palace upon the sand.

In your next paragraph, p. 11, Letter II. you say, "To come from God with a message to man is a very serious and important thing, for which no man, however excellent, hath any right to expect that his own word should be taken." You then suggest, that "Emanuel Swedenborg might deceive himself, especially by supposing he had intercourse with God and the invisible world by *night*; that seeing an angel in a dream, is but dreaming he saw one; and the same reveries might

“ might be by day, and his writings appear to me
 “ nothing more than what so ingenious and labo-
 “ rious a man, of fertile imagination, was very
 “ well capable of.”

That a message from God to man is a serious and important thing, we allow ; nor has any man, however excellent, a right to expect his own word should be taken. And we are as far from taking Emanuel Swedenborg's own word, as we are from taking Dr. Priestley's, if he should tell us that the soul of man is a lump of dirt, water, fire, and air, mixed together in a very curious manner. We must have something more than a man's bare word in all matters of religion ; nor will dreams by night, or reveries by day, satisfy us—they would be of no more effect in compelling our faith, than miracles were to the whole Jewish nation. No, Sir, it is a rational, solid, and scriptural conviction, that can alone compel us to believe whatever relates to religion, and the happiness of our souls. It is upon this ground we receive the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and upon no other ; which ground I shall consider in my next Letter. But, Sir, if you conceive his writings to be nothing more than such as an ingenious and laborious man of a fertile imagination is capable of, I cannot help thinking you have read but few of his works, or if most of them, but in a very cursory manner ; because it not only appears to me, but also to a great number of very judicious, rational, and intelligent minds, that no mere man could have
 written

written what he has done, except *peculiarly taught* of God. And I am not unwilling to acknowledge, that the vast depth of wisdom, and uncommon extent of knowledge manifest in his works, is a very strong presumptive evidence to us that he was a messenger from God.

You seem happy to find a virtual appeal to an existing fact, which it is possible to ascertain by proper inquiry. The fact you allude to is the reception of our doctrines in the interior parts of Africa, and which, you say, we are willing to consider as a proof that he (Emanuel Swedenborg) was really inspired, notwithstanding our *affecting* not to want the evidence of miracles. Indeed, Sir, I know not that we *affect* any thing of this kind. We want no miracles in proof for our own conviction, being rationally and scripturally convinced without them; nevertheless, we doubt not the truth of what Emanuel Swedenborg has said upon that subject, and shall be happy to have it authenticated in the fullest manner, for the satisfaction of Dr. Priestley, or any other incredulous mind. For I may very justly apply a few lines of your own to the present case, with which I shall conclude this Letter. "That all mankind were not immediately "convinced of the truth of christianity, may be sufficiently accounted for" (this, and what follows, will apply in the present instance) "as from the "little interest that great numbers take in any thing "relating to religion, from the aversion which the "greatest part of mankind have to examine into
"any

“ any thing that is new, when it is hostile to that
 “ which is *old*; and their listening to any idle tales
 “ to the prejudice of those who teach it, which we
 “ see every day. And if the powerful, the learned,
 “ and the polite, whose prejudices are (very) strong,
 “ would not read or think seriously on the subject,
 “ many others would be influenced by their example,
 “ and join in a *blind* opposition to what they had
 “ never considered, from imagining that it was not
 “ worth their while to consider it*.”

Thus it is with thousands at this day; they receive not the truth, because it is opposite to their own systems; they hear every idle tale against it to increase their own prejudices, and will not consider it seriously and candidly for themselves, least they should be converted from their false doctrines, and healed of their errors.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

YOU say, in the latter end of your second Letter, that as we withhold the evidence of proper miracles, “ in confirmation of our doctrines;

* See Dr. Priestley's Discourse on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, p. 36.

“ and

“and the mission of E. Swedenborg’s evidence of
 “some other kind, which can only be the con-
 “formity of your doctrines to the natural reason of
 “things, and the *plain sense* of scripture, ought to be
 “peculiarly strong.” To these texts you have
 attempted to bring the principal of our doctrines.
 But, Sir, as I am persuaded you have done that
 work but very imperfectly, I will also make the
 attempt, and see if I can succeed any better, if not,
 I own I must give up the cause to abler hands. I
 proceed to your third Letter, and as I wish to be
 as concise as the nature of the subject will admit, I
 shall not follow you, particularly, through every
 sentence, yet not designedly omit *one* which you
 might suppose *important* and peculiarly applicable
 to the matter in hand. Your whole Letter goes
 to prove that Jesus Christ is a distinct person from
 God the Father, and a mere man.

I will first consider your own arguments, with
 the texts you have advanced to confirm them, and
 then offer a few in vindication of our own view;
 that Jesus Christ is properly God, and the only
 God. I confess, Sir, in this article we differ as
 widely as it is possible for two persons to do; and
 I have not the vanity to suppose I shall convince
 Dr. Priestley by all I can say, nor do I believe an
 angel from heaven would be able to do it. You
 have, no doubt, read a great number of writings
 which have been written on this important subject;
 as also probably what is written in the works of

E. Swedenborg. But still your views are the same, and I am inclined to believe will be in and through this life, your confirmation is so great. However, the subject is of vast magnitude and importance—an error here is an awful one—and we cannot reason upon it with too much seriousness and caution; not that I think it a difficult subject, hard to be understood and known, but the reverse: I presume it is plainly and fully stated in the holy word; and to that word I am willing to appeal—upon that ground, Sir, I cheerfully meet you. All that you say about the rules concerning the use of words, may be very proper, and to dispute about mere words, or the use of them, will only be spending time to little purpose. That Jesus Christ speaks of being sent by the Father—prayed to the Father—that of himself he could do nothing—that the Father was greater than he—that the apostles speak of him as a man approved of God—and many times they speak of him as distinct from the Father; all this we allow.

But, Sir, it is something curious, that all the texts you have advanced, from p. 21 to 24, you consider as *merely literal*, and that they must be literally understood; but in the next page, you quote John xiv. 8, *Shew us the Father?* Jesus said, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; and say, “that we cannot deny but Jesus was used to speak “in figurative language;” suggesting this text as one proof of it. But is this text any more figurative

tive than that mentioned in your 23d page, *I and my Father are one?* or, *My Father is greater than I?*—I should suppose not. Should any gentleman, to whom you are unknown, meet you in a London Coffee-house, enter into conversation with you, and say, Sir, I have heard of Dr. Priestley, but never saw him; can you tell me where I may obtain an interview with him? And suppose you were to reply, Sir, He who hath seen me, hath seen Dr. Priestley? Would there be any ambiguity in this answer? Would it not be plain and obvious? Nay, would it not be a more elegant reply than saying, I am Dr. Priestley? That Jesus Christ is frequently spoken of as distinct from the Father, that he spake of himself in that manner, and that he prayed to the Father, and also that the apostles frequently mention him as distinct, is true, and all easily accounted for. He appeared among the Jews as the Son of God, and actually was so, as to his humanity—he appeared as a man, and really was a man—he came to teach, to suffer, and to die—he came as the promised Messiah, the seed of the woman, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, and it was highly necessary he should appear as a man. And in his state of humiliation, suffering, and death, he was, as to the humanity, distinct from the deity, or the Father; for deity could not suffer nor die. Moreover, it is plain that the Lord concealed his divinity from the Jews—he ordered his disciples not to tell them who he was. Had they actually known that he was the God of their fathers, veiled in a human body,

they could not have lifted up a hand against him, or crucified him. Again, that dispensation was more peculiarly a dispensation of the Son; his humanity was called the Son of God, and it was so. The apostles, therefore, preached him to Jews and Gentiles, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world: hence there was no impropriety in the distinctions made—they are necessary and important.

You suggest, Sir, that our Lord meant, when he said, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*, the *works* that were done by him; but I may as well suppose another thing as you suppose *that*, it being a mere supposition only. I am inclined to think that if any man had came to Isaiah the prophet, or Peter the apostle, and said, as Thomas does here, *Lord (or Master) we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? And also, Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth?* And Isaiah or Peter had replied, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; if ye had known me ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him; he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* I say, had Isaiah or Peter made this reply, you would, I presume, have thought it a most arrogant, presumptuous, and false one; and yet if Jesus be, as you say, but a *mere man*, I see not why he should thus speak any more than Isaiah, Peter, or any other prophet or apostle.

You say, we urge Col. ii. 9, *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; but this, you say,

say, might be the case without Jesus Christ himself being God, when the divine power was manifested by him. Indeed, Sir? What then, is the divine power alone *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*? Has the Godhead *nothing* but divine power? Are there not divine love, divine wisdom, divine omniscience, divine omnipresence, divine goodness, &c. &c. in the Godhead? And can all the fulness of the Godhead be where *all the Godhead is not*? And can all the Godhead, with all its fulness bodily, dwell in a being who is *not God*? Did all the fulness of the godhead dwell bodily in Paul, when he healed the lame man at Lystra of Lycaonia? Here the *divine power was manifested*, but all the fulness of the Godhead bodily was as far from dwelling in Paul, as Paul was from creating the universe.—Surely, Sir, I may here say, that *powerful reasoners* sometimes deal in *very weak* arguments. And is the phraseology of this passage unfavourable to our hypothesis also? What, cannot that which dwells in a person be the same thing with himself? Indeed, Sir, I thought it might, and I think so still. I allow, that if Dr. Priestley dwells in a mansion, or J. Proud in a cottage, that mansion is not Dr. Priestley, nor that cottage J. Proud. But if wisdom, affection, thought, rationality, dwell in Dr. Priestley, I say they are the same things with himself—take them all away, and where shall we find the Doctor? Therefore I rationally and scripturally conclude, that if all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ, then the Godhead

is there. If all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him, there is no part of that fulness in any other but him; if there cannot be all the fulness of the Godhead, unless there be *all* divine power, wisdom, love, omniscience, omnipresence, goodness, &c. &c. then all of divine power, wisdom, love, omniscience, &c. are in the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. And if all this fulness be in him, yea, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, where am I to find another God? or why should I seek for another? Would it not be superlative folly to suppose there are two beings in whom dwell all the fulness of the Godhead? I presume it would.

You say, p. 26, "We urge Christ's saying (John x. 30) "*that he and the Father are one*, i. e. "the same God. But by the same argument all "the disciples of Christ may be proved to be united with them in the Godhead. For he prays, "John xvii. 11, *that they might be one as they two were one*, ver. 21, *that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*" My dear Sir, subterfuge and sophistry, in matters of a religious nature, I utterly dislike; and I am sorry to say there appears too much of these in your Letters. You must know, Sir, that if ver. 11, 21, are to be considered in the light you would here represent them, they must militate as much against your own views as ours. For if the disciples are to be all that in relation to the Father, or Deity, which Christ is, then they must all be Christs, Saviours, and Sons of God, just

just as he was: so that this is straining the point by much too far. That Jesus and the Father are one, will be proved by and bye. But we all well know what is meant by the union here spoken of, between the disciples and their God, viz. a spiritual conjunction, that the christian's life may be from the Lord, they living in him and by him a life of love, wisdom, and purity, and thus being happy with him for ever. But this might be illustrated still farther, if this were a proper place for it; beside it is not said that they may *be one with us*, but *one in us*. However it would be quite needless to dwell on this circumstance, it being so obvious to every rational mind.

Akin to the above, Sir, is what you say, about the middle of p. 27, "Matt. xxiii. 9, *One is your Father, even God*," [rather, one is your Father *which is in heaven*]. "but does it therefore follow that we have no other Father besides God, and yet, according to your argument, if every person who is called a *saviour* be God, every one who is called a *father* must be so too." I sincerely wish, Sir, you would forbear this evasive and sophistical method of arguing; it can do you no credit, nor gain you any advantage. We pretend not to say that every person who is called a Saviour is *God* also; we acknowledge there have been many saviours or deliverers, who are not Gods; we only say that the *Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour* is God, and not merely because he is called a saviour, but because he is that which no one but God himself can be. The

texts you allude to in this page of yours, will be considered presently. But you add, "We lay great stress on Christ being called *the Alpha and the Omega*; but this is no more a proper name of God, than *saviour*, or *father*. It may signify the *chief*, or *founder* of any thing." Indeed, Sir! I never heard this before, that Alpha and Omega may be so applied—I think we have not yet adopted it in common language. Do we call the founder of the Free School in New-street, *Alpha and Omega*? or the chief of an army by that name, or those names rather? Are those words, or names, applied to any one, throughout the whole book of God, except the *Lord Jehovah*? Twice in *Isajah*, *xliv. 6, xlviii. 12*, he is called the *First and the Last* (which means, doubtless, the same as Alpha and Omega). And in *Rev. i. 8, xxii. 13*, these two names are mentioned, and in both places evidently applied to Jesus Christ. And thus it appears that this is a proper name of God, in a much stricter sense than *saviour*, or *father*; because men have been called both the latter, but there is not one place in which this name, *Alpha and Omega*, is mentioned in the whole bible, but it applies to God alone. And I do not recollect that it is used in any common writings by any author, ancient or modern, in respect to any person or being, save the Lord. And even the obvious sense of the words implies, that they only belong to God, as no one can be the *First and the Last*, in a strict and proper sense, but God only. And as it is plainly applied to Jesus Christ,

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you have, Sir, reminded us of one text in proof of his proper divinity.

You say, p. 28, " that a person being *occasionally* "denominated by the name of God is no proof that "he is God." We allow this. Nor is it so slender a foundation as a particular name occasionally given, on which we establish the sole divinity of Jesus Christ, though you would seem to suggest as much. What you say about the *trinity*, p. 28, 29, I shall refer to a future Letter; and as to the Preface annexed to the Summary View, I see nothing improper in—but we will say, in your own words, p. 29, " We hesitate not to meet the full force of popular prejudice, by admitting the imputations of "our adversaries in their most obnoxious forms; "confident that truth stands in need of no shelter "at all." And I know of no shelter that we have recourse to.

You say, p. 30, " With a change of our "phraseology, and very little in our ideas, we are "as proper unitarians as you, who are usually called "Socinians." Is it so, Sir? Will a *very little* change in our ideas make us such unitarians as yourselves? Then, Sir, your best step would have been to have shewn us what that *very little* in our ideas is, and confined yourself merely to that subject, as I dare say you would willingly make us such kind of unitarians. But, Sir, I am as yet obliged to believe, that our ideas are as essentially different from your's as it is possible for them to be; because we believe that the Lord Jesus is the only God of
heaven

heaven and earth, in his own divine person, and you say the word that dwelt in him was the one true God; but at the same time you have told us that which dwelt in him was not the same thing with himself, but *quite different from him*. You add, "what is the difference, excepting in words, between saying that Jesus was a man *united* to God, and a "man *inspired* by God." Why, Sir, we think the difference is exceeding great, inasmuch as persons may be inspired by the Lord, and at the same time not united to him. Our bible, I think, will furnish us with proofs of this.

We cannot, at present, take the advice you give us in the last sentence or two of your third Letter, viz. to say *only* that Jesus was a man, and that God was with him, and acted by him. We can say this of Moses, the prophets, and apostles, but we cannot rank the Lord Jesus Christ with these men. We are willing, with you, to disclaim all plurality of Gods, together with different persons in the Trinity; but in saying what you would have us say, as above, we think we should not effectually secure the truth of all the declarations of Christ, as proceeding from God just as much as if he himself had been God. Therefore, Sir, as yet, we are not on this subject agreed. Perhaps in my next Letter our *difference* may still more fully appear; in the mean time I wish to agree with you in all that is good and true, and am,

Rev. Sir, yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR,

I Observe, in your third Letter, you wonder we contend so much for a *trinity*, because the *word itself* is not mentioned in the bible; and you suggest the trinity we contend for is a very imperfect one. As to the *word itself* is of little consequence; however I do not know that a better can be made use of to express a three-fold principle, and if our views of a trinity be imperfect, you must, Sir, to correct us in this case, correct the bible also. For we only mean what the angel meant when he spake to Mary; what Jesus meant; and also his apostles. The Angel says, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest overshadow thee, and that holy thing born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* Here mention is made of three, viz. the *Highest*, the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Son of God*; Luke i. 35. Jesus says, Matt. xxviii. 19, *Go ye; and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* And John's 1st Epist. v. 7, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* Hence, Sir, we say there is a *proper trinity* in the one God; and also that there are *three essentials* of one God. But as this subject does not immediately affect our
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controverſy, and as I have one before me of more importance to be firſt known. I ſhall, as to this, refer you to the Univerſal Theology, No. 163 to 168.

You tell us, in the beginning of your fourth Letter, that you think you have ſhewn there is no foundation in reaſon or the ſcriptures, for *Chriſt and God being the ſame perſon*. And in your late Sermon on the Reſurrection, you ſignify that one of the great corruptions of chriſtianity, “ is the “ *idolatrous worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, and other human “ beings,*” p. 21 of that Sermon. Now, Sir, as we think you have not ſhewn us, either from reaſon or ſcripture, that Chriſt and God are not the ſame perſon; and as we judge the greateſt corruption in chriſtianity is, that Jeſus Chriſt is not worſhipped as God only; I ſhall, in this Letter, endeavour to prove the very reverſe of what you think you have proved already, viz. that the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt is the *only true God*.

It is truly aſtoniſhing that ſentiments ſo diametrically oppoſite, concerning the one God of heaven and earth, ſhould obtain amongſt the judicious, learned, and pious, in the chriſtian world. But ſo it is; and perhaps there is no article in which they are more divided than in this. It is true, the greater part of chriſtians believe in the *divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt (though few own him to be God alone). And it appears (to me at leaſt) that the principal cauſe why the Unitarians, Socinians, Arians (call them what you pleaſe) gave into the
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notion that the Father only is God, and Jesus no more than a man, is, that they could by no means reconcile the idea of three Gods, or three persons in the Godhead, and therefore they concluded, as a more consistent scheme, that the Father alone is God, and Jesus only a man, not being able to bear the idea of more Gods than one. And as men may confirm almost any doctrine by the bare letter of the word, confining themselves to some particular parts of it; so they took those parts in confirmation of their opinions, and little regarded the others. Nevertheless, one would think an impartial and unprejudiced mind would take into the account *every* part of the word, comparing one with the other, and thus judge of doctrine by the uniform consent and agreement of the whole. And how it is possible for any person to proceed in *this manner*, and at the same time conceive that the Lord Jesus is *not God*, I confess I am at a loss to account for. —You have, Sir, adduced a few texts, in order to confirm your views, which I have already considered; you have mentioned one or two in favor of our scheme, which you have tried to evade. But I must take the liberty of laying before you, and all who may read these pages, many more portions of the holy word, in confirmation of our sentiments. Not that I doubt your being acquainted with them, or that I expect they will operate in your conviction; for a confirmation in error is a negation of truth: and I wish it to be understood, that I do not answer your Letters from a presumption

tion that I shall convert Dr. Priestley to our views, but rather to vindicate divine truth—oppose the influence of error—and be useful to mankind.

I shall, Sir, first, adduce some passages out of the Prophets, to prove that Jehovah, God himself, is the Saviour and Redeemer, and then refer to others in the New Testament, in proof that the Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, is that Jehovah, God himself.

And it shall be said, in that day, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is Jehovah* (as you know it is Jehovah, not Lord, in the original Hebrew) *we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation, Isa. xxv. 9. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert an highway for our God; for the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, Isa. xl. 3, 5, 10, 11. I Jehovah am thy God, and thou shalt know no God besides me, for there is no Saviour beside me, Hosea xiii. 4. The Lord of Hosts is his Name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall be called, Isa. liv. 5. Behold the days come, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and this is his Name, Jehovah our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. v. And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and his Name one, Zach. xiv. 9. He shall be called the*

the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6. I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God, Isa. xlv. 6. xlviii. 12. And God said to Moses, I AM that I AM. I AM hath sent me unto you, Exodus iii. 14.

These, Sir (with many more) are plain, obvious texts of scripture, not only declaring that the Lord God Almighty is the Saviour of men, but that very Saviour which was to come and appear in the flesh. He is declared to be the Jehovah, expected and waited for, that he will save us. His glory was to be revealed, and all flesh to see it. That this Lord God would come with strong hand, and feed his flock like a shepherd. He is called both *Saviour, Redeemer, Lord of Hosts, Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth.* And suppose there were not a single passage in the New Testament relative to this subject, would not every rational mind conclude that the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind must be this one *Jehovah God*? Would not a man as soon believe *black is white* as that this God is not the Saviour and Redeemer, actually and really, but that a *mere man* was so?—But let us see what the New Testament says upon this subject. Jesus says, *Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM, John viii. 58. If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins, viii. 24. I and my Father are one, x. 30. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty, Rev. i. 8. I am he that liveth,*
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and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death, ver. 18. He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me, John xii. 45. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; the Father dwelleth in me, xiv. 9, 10, 11. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9. God was manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Emanuel, which is God with us, Matt. i. 23. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 10. I saw the death, small and great, stand before God, Rev. xx. 12. The word was with God, and the word was God, all things were made by him; in him was life, and the life is the light of men; the world was made by him, John i. 3, 4, &c. Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life, xiv. 6. I am the resurrection and the life, xi. 25. He is God over all blessed for ever, Rom. ix. 5. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the church, Col. i. 16, 17, 18. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. Jesus breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, John xx. 22. Go ye, and teach all nations, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and lo I am with you even unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

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These texts you see, Sir, are all plain—fairly quoted. No sophistry is wanted to turn and twist them to our purpose. Here it is obvious that *Jesus Christ is the I AM, the Almighty, God in the flesh, the Creator, Light and Life of the world, God over all, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Alpha and Omega, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the only wise God our Saviour*, Jude 25.—He is omnipotent; all power is his—He is omniscient; *Lord, thou knowest all things*—He is omnipresent; *Lo, I am with you, even to the end of the world*—He is worshipped and adored by all in heaven; *I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, &c.* Rev. v. 11, 12.—And again, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee*, Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Now, Sir, these are only a few of those texts which prove the Lord Jesus Christ to be the one God of heaven and earth; here is no comment upon them—not a word altered as I know of.—Every one of these texts apply to, and are spoken of, the Lord Jesus the Saviour. And will you say still that he is not the only God? that he is not pro-

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perly God at all? that he is a *mere man*, a *mere creature*? that it is *idolatry* to worship him? Are all the angels and saints in heaven continually committing *idolatry*, while they are bowing the knee before the Lord Jesus, and giving glory to his name? Did they say wrong, when they said, *all nations shall come and worship before thee*?—Can you say, with an unflinching tongue, that it is *idolatry* to worship this Lord God and Saviour?—Did John fall down as dead at the feet of the mighty God and Son of man, who stood in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, clothed with a garment down to the feet, girt about the breasts with a golden girdle; his head and hair white like wool, his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters; in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength? Did John, I say, fall down at his feet as dead, being impressed with the profoundest awe, humility, and fear, at the presence of so divine and glorious a personage; and can you tell us, John, all the saints and angels in heaven, and we upon earth are idolaters, because we worship this most glorious, omnipotent, Almighty Lord?

For a moment, Sir, imagine yourself in the situation John was then in; that the Lord Jesus thus apparelled, and appearing in all this heavenly glory, and divine majesty, stood now before you; and suppose him saying to you, *I am Alpha and Omega,*
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the Almighty, thy Lord and thy Saviour—what would you boldly look up and daringly say, “Jesus, I know thee; thou art only a man like myself; I shall not bow the knee in thy presence; I will not be guilty of *idolatry*—thou deservest no more worship than myself; thou wast a great prophet I own—but thou art only a man; I am a great philosopher, and a man like thee; I worship thee not.”—Would you dare thus to address your Lord! I should think not.

Think not, Sir, that I bear too hard upon you. I do not. You declare this mighty God to be a man—a *creature only*—and that it is idolatry to worship him! And I can truly say my heart is grieved for you while I write. I lament that a man of your abilities and learning should thus degrade the God and Saviour who created you, redeemed you, and still preserves you; especially I am grieved, as considering you a minister, who may be an instrument of leading thousands into a delusion so dreadful, a faith so contrary both to reason and scripture. How sensibly must Saul be affected, when going to Damascus, the Lord appeared, and said unto him, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*. And surely, Sir, no less can be said of you, when you tell us that the worship of Jesus Christ is *idolatry*, and a great *abomination*. But you will perhaps say, all the texts I have advanced will not convince you that the Lord Jesus is the only God, or God at all. It may be so; and I expect it. But what then—though you are so deeply confirmed in your sen-

timents and prejudices against the Lord Jesus Christ, as not to believe the express declarations of himself, his prophets, and apostles; yet I trust *every one* is not so confirmed. For here it is plain, that we have the testimony of Jehovah God, *before* the incarnation; that of Jesus, *after* the incarnation; and the united evidence of prophets and apostles, all declaring the one God *to be the alone Saviour and Redeemer*; all positively asserting Jesus Christ to be that identical Saviour and Redeemer, and every one witnessing that the Lord Jesus is *properly* and *truly* God, both by his *names*, his *attributes*, and his *works*: his *names*—he bears every name that is applicable to the *true God*, and to *God only*; his *attributes*—*almighty, omniscient, omnipresent*, essential holiness (thou only art holy), everlasting or eternal, &c. &c.; his *works*—created the world, yea, all things; raised the dead (not as the apostles, viz. in the name of Jesus we do this or that, but) in his own name, and by his own divine power; forgave sins, commanded the wind and the sea with a word, caused a few small loaves to feed several thousand people, upholds all things, &c. &c. He is worshipped and adored by all in heaven, and every knee shall and must bow to his name, even the knee of Dr. Priestley.

Now, Sir, if all these things do not prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, yea, the only God, I wish to know how it is possible to prove any thing at all. And as to the union of the humanity with the divinity, cannot we
conceive

conceive of that as well as a thousand other things which we give the fullest credit to? Did not the Almighty appear to Moses, Abraham, and many more, as an *angel*, in a proper human form? Did he not converse *face to face*, as a man with his friend? He surely did. But yet it is said, no man could see his face and live; consequently they did not see the essential divinity, but God appeared in these forms to them. And cannot the Almighty God take the human nature also? Was not that humanity born of Mary from God alone? And is it not as easy for Jehovah to unite a humanity with his divinity, or clothe himself therewith, as it is for him to unite our bodies with our souls, or clothe our souls with those bodies? And could the blessed God be ever seen or approached by us, if he did not take a human form? Surely, Sir, there is nothing so very incomprehensible in all this. Therefore, by calling the deity, or divinity, the Father; the humanity, the Son; and the divine proceeding, or operation, the Holy Ghost; we have the one true God in *one divine person*, and that God *the Lord God our Saviour* *. To whom be praise and glory for ever!

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours, &c.

* See Hodson's Jesus Christ the True God, p. 131 to 134.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR,

THE greater part of your fourth Letter respects some particular circumstances relative to the union of the human nature with the divinity; circumstances these which no way affect the main doctrines we espouse, and the disquisition of which would take up a great deal more room and time, than I can, with any degree of convenience, bestow in this Answer. Nevertheless, I wish not to evade any one article, which you or your friends may think conclusive against our views. What I have said at the end of my last Letter, with the quotation from Dr. Hodson, will, I presume, be a sufficient answer to your remarks upon the union. You say, p. 34, Letter IV. "It is a fundamental article of our faith, that Christ, or God, is but one person, one thinking intelligent mind; and that there was no other principle of intelligence belonging to Jesus; and certainly the mere body, glorified or not glorified, was incapable of thinking, or dictating any language at all." I cannot, Sir, pass over this article, although a *full discussion* of it is incompatible with the brevity I intend. Had you attended (as I once advised you) more deliberately to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and made yourself more particularly acquainted

quainted with them, by allowing yourself more time before you wrote against our doctrines, I do think, Sir, you would have seen several things in a very different light—we do allow that Jesus Christ was a *proper man*; and if, Sir, we had the same ideas of a *man* as it appears you have, we might very easily account for the circumstance you mention. For, if I am not much mistaken, you consider man as nothing more than a mere body of flesh, blood, and bones: if I am mistaken herein I must beg your pardon. But do you not say that man is altogether *material*? and that the *mind* is nothing more than a fortuitious concatenation of matter? that at death, when the functions of the body cease, there is no longer any *mind, thinking principle, or intelligence*, until the raising of that body again from the earth? If so, why might not the body of the Lord think, and dictate language, as well as your's or mine? But, Sir, we say that every man has a soul distinct from his body, and which is spiritual and substantial, not material; which soul is so formed as to be receptive of love and wisdom from the Lord, having a will and understanding; that the Lord Jesus had such a natural soul, or principle, though not from man, but from the divinity; hence he could think, and dictate language—for the Lord could not be strictly and properly a man, unless he had all that which is essential to man. And all that he must have immediately from the divinity, as he had no natural father. If you read what Emanuel Swedenborg says upon this subject, in the Universal

Theology, No. 110, and Doctrine of the Lord, No. 29, I presume you are so much of a philosopher as perfectly to understand him; and I the rather refer you to his writings on this and the like subjects, because a full discussion of them would carry these Letters to a length far beyond what I intend. For this reason it is that I shall pass over the remaining part of your fourth Letter, at least for the present, as I am willing to consider the most important of your objections.

I proceed, therefore, to your fifth Letter, which respects the second coming of the Lord, and the last judgment. These, I acknowledge, are with us *fundamental* subjects:—if these are not true, as stated by Emanuel Swedenborg, and maintained by us, much of our system falls to the ground. Your words are as follows:—"Another of the conspicuous doctrines of your new church, relates to the second coming of Christ, and a future judgment. This, you say, has already taken place in the spiritual world, to which alone it belongs, and that it was accomplished in the year 1757. From this time you suppose your new church, denoted in the scriptures by the kingdom of Christ, commences; that it is to spread, and fill the whole earth; to continue for ever, there being no termination of the present state of things; or any future judgment to look for. Such are your ideas. Let us now see what the scriptures say on these subjects." But, Sir, if the scripture says no more about these subjects than what you have mentioned, it says but very

very little indeed ; for you have only produced three lines out of the evangelists, none out of the prophets, and a quotation of considerable length from Paul's Epistles.

This is the very way, Sir, by which men confirm and establish all their errors and traditions ; two or three passages are adduced, which seem to favour their views, and all the rest are kept as much as possible out of sight. Do you really think there is nothing more said about the second advent of the Lord, and future judgment, in all the bible ? or is there not a great deal more ? If there be, should not the whole be fairly considered, comparing one part with another, that we may come to a just and accurate judgment upon the subject ? I should suppose this is the fairest and most likely way to determine rightly.

Now it appears very clearly that there are a great number of passages in the holy word, which respect the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the last judgment ; and which passages prove that both the signs of his coming, and his appearance also, are spiritual, and not natural, material, or literal. You seem, Sir, to insist much upon the literal sense of the word, as though it had no other sense ; and yet, when that literal sense appears to be against your ideas, then you admit of a *different interpretation*—but then that interpretation may be right or wrong, just as it happens, inasmuch as you have no certain rule to go by. You say, p. 25, “ In all cases we interpret what is figurative and
“ obscure,

“obscure, by what is clear and express;” and p. 42, “Whatever spiritual sense we put upon the scriptures, it must at least be consistent with the literal sense of them.” Allowing this, Sir, let me ask you a question or two—How will you explain the following texts of scripture by the literal sense: *For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; the sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, &c.* Isa. vi. 17—19. *And behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which were upon the top thereof; and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. Then, said he, these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth,* Zech. iv. 2, 3. 14. *In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness,* xii. 4. *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness to the Lord.*

Now, Sir, by what rule will you interpret these places? to what part of the letter of the word will you go for explanation? or how will you explain Ezek. xxxix. 17 to 20; Rev. xix. 17, 18, respecting eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the mighty, the princes of the earth; horses, chariots,

chariots, kings, captains, and eating the flesh of all men, both bond and free, &c.? What rule have you for defining the true sense of these, and a thousand more passages? Do expositors agree in their explanations of these texts? If there is one plain and obvious rule for them to go by, and they know that rule, then surely they will be agreed. But is it so? You well know they do not agree. One conjectures one thing, and another a quite different one. Again, suppose we turn to Joel ii. 30, 31, *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smok; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.* And iii. 15, *The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.* What will you make of this? Perhaps you will say, "Why this will literally come to pass at the "end of time." Now, Sir, except you can interpret these obscure passages by what is *clear and express*, and make them consistent with the literal sense of the word, I must conclude there are exceptions to your rule, and your own argument fails you; for you say in *all cases* we must so do. Try, Sir, if you can do it here.

Perhaps you will say, I have chosen the most abstruse and difficult texts I could find. No, Sir, I can find hundreds more, as much so; and which you can no more interpret, by the above method, than you can these. But *we* have another, a better and more sure rule to go by, in judging of, and interpreting

terpreting, the sacred scriptures; and that is the science of correspondences, by which the holy word is written.—By a knowledge of this science, the most obscure parts of the word are understood; and any two, or twenty persons, who have an equal knowledge of this science, will interpret any given part of the bible exactly alike, as to *sense* and *substance*, though in phraseology they may vary. That the word has a spiritual or internal sense, you allow, by your own concessions; for you say, “We cannot deny but Jesus was used to speak in figurative language.” That figure, therefore, was the letter, or literal part; and what was in, or under, that figure, was the true internal or spiritual meaning. We allow that Jesus not only spake by figures, but also by correspondences, as is easy to make appear; for he said, *he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life*. Here is not only a figure, but a correspondence; and flesh and blood corresponded to what was spiritual.

Now, Sir, the subject we have to consider, is the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, it is a literal coming; and we say, it is a spiritual one—it remains, therefore, for us to examine the holy word hereupon. You suppose by the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven; real clouds, literally understood, are meant here, viz. the common vapory clouds over our heads. But, Sir, if this be the case, there is one circumstance very curious and extraordinary. You are a philosopher, Sir—you know this earth is globular, nearly round—

that

that there are a vast number of inhabitants, dwelling in what we call the Antipodes. Now, if the Lord Jesus Christ actually descends in a vapory cloud, allowing it to be a very large one, is it not something extraordinary that all the inhabitants round the whole globe shall see him come? For the Lord expressly says, *ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH shall mourn, and see him coming in the clouds of heaven.* Surely the inhabitants of the earth must, at that time, have a wonderful power of vision, to see a *man* ten or twelve thousand miles off; and the sight of many of them, must also penetrate through the body of the earth, which, perhaps, is not much less than seven thousand miles in diameter.

Upon my word, Sir, I must here adopt your own words, and say, "It is impossible to consider your opinions, on serious subjects, with perfect seriousness." But suppose we examine what is meant, in the word of the Lord, by clouds. *There is none like unto the God of Jesburan, who rideth in the heaven, and in his excellency, on the clouds,* Deut. xxxiii. 26. *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the clouds,* Psal. lxxviii. 4. *Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud,* Isa. xix. 1. *Ascribe ye strength unto Jehovah, his strength is in the clouds,* Psal. lxxviii. 34. *The Lord hath created upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, a cloud by day, and upon all the glory shall be a defence,* Isa. iv. 5. Is it not plain that all these clouds do not mean the vapory clouds a little above our heads? It would, Sir, be an insult upon

upon your understanding, to suppose you thought these *clouds* signify vapors in the air.

But, again, it is said, at the second advent of the Lord, *the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven*, Matt. xxiv. 29. By which, it is generally understood, that the material sun shall be turned into darkness, or cease to shine—the material moon give no more light—and the stars above us, actually fall from their spheres. But where they are to fall to, I know not—our earth will not hold one of them; however, if the Almighty tumbles them down, no doubt, he will find a place for them. But, Sir, there is one circumstance would have corrected our judgment in this matter, had it been attended to; and it is wonderful to me that it has been so much overlooked. We all know the prophet Joel speaks of the very same things, ii. 31. iii. 15. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, and the stars withdraw their shining, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.* And Acts ii. At the day of Pentecost, Peter stands up, and says, *These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.* But this is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel, and then he repeats the whole passage of sons and daughters, prophesying, &c. *I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire, and vapors of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord comes.*

Here you evidently see all these things are by Peter applied to that present time and dispensation. And we all know the sun and moon were not darkened and turned into blood, nor did the stars fall from heaven, or withdraw their shining. It is therefore as plainly evident that the prophesy had a spiritual meaning, and a spiritual accomplishment. Consequently, when the Lord tells us, that at his second coming, *the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven*; much the same is to be understood, as by the prophet Joel, viz. something spiritual, to which those things correspond. I suppose you will allow, that the 21st and 22d chapters in the Revelations, respect the Lord's second coming, and what will then take place; but will you consider those chapters literally also? If so, there will actually descend from heaven, a great city, fifteen hundred miles square, and fifteen hundred miles high; and yet this city is called, the *Bride*, the *Lamb's wife*. Thus, Sir, you see, you must admit of a spiritual meaning in the holy word; or what can be made of it? In fact, if the bible had not a spiritual meaning within the literal, it would be impossible to understand a very considerable part of it, or to reconcile one part with another.—But you will perhaps say, “If there be a spiritual sense in the word, how is it that men differ so materially in their judgment concerning that sense?” The reason is obvious:—that is, the science of correspondences, in which the word is written, has long been lost among men; and

and the introduction of three persons in the God-head, or three Gods into the church, with the denial of the Lord's divinity, have perverted the judgment, closed the understanding to spiritual truth, and induced darkness. But the Lord hath at this day, in divine mercy, made known that science again, and opened the true sense of his holy word. You will perhaps rejoin, "This is only begging the question; we want proof that it is so." To which I reply, that proof can only be given by making yourselves acquainted with the science itself, and applying it to the word, for your own conviction. You plainly see, that if two or twenty men, of learning and abilities, attempt to explain any difficult part of the word, they differ very materially, yea, essentially, one from the other; because they are left to mere conjecture concerning the true meaning. But if two, twenty, or an hundred men, were to give their judgment upon a difficult or mysterious portion of the word, if they are equally acquainted with the science above-named, they would all exactly agree in their exposition; not in consequence of having a greater depth of judgment and understanding than the other two or twenty men, but from a knowledge of the science itself. But to return.

Let us take a little notice of those prophecies which particularly relate to the second coming of the Lord. *And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people,*

people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms; and it shall stand for ever, Dan. ii.

44. I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, vii.

13, 14. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominion shall serve and obey him, ver. 27. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. Zech. xiv. 7, 8, 9. See Joel iii. 18 to the end.—

Isa. xi. 5 to the end. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 15. For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind, Isa. lxxv. 17; read the

remaining verses, with chap. lxvi. 20, to the end. Compare with Rev. xxi. 1, *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* See ver. 10, to the end.

Compare all the above with Matt. xxiv. 27 to 41, and then, Sir, consider the passages you have mentioned in your 39th and 40th pages, in connexion with these; and judge whether the coming of the Lord will be literal or spiritual. Our Lord says, Matt. xxiv. 27, *For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; viz. gloriously to enlighten the world, from one end to the other.* But neither the true sense of the text above quoted, or the predictions in Matt. xxiv. with nearly the whole of the Revelation, can be understood, unless the spiritual sense of the word be known; for great part of Matt. xxiv. is descriptive of the successive states of the christian church, to its consummation, or end. That the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, would be set up in the church; false prophets and false Christs would arise; iniquity abound; and the consequence of which would be, that the sun would be darkened, the moon give not her light, the stars fall from heaven, &c. But if the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of the Lord, if the New Jerusalem is to descend, if the kingdom and
dominion,

dominion, &c. under the whole heaven be to be given to the saints of the Most High, if in that day the knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth, all are to know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; if all people, nations, and languages, are to serve him, &c. &c. then the sun, moon, and stars cannot be destroyed; literally; for, in that case, there would be no possibility for the inhabitants of the world to exist. We have before proved, that the clouds cannot mean the vapory clouds in our horizon; that the sun, moon, and stars do not mean those above us, as Joel prophesied in the same language long before Christ came, and the apostle declared that prophesy was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost. But when we consider that the abomination which makes desolate, is the worship of more Gods than one, and not worshipping the true God; that in consequence hereof, every falsehood and error has been introduced into the christian church, inasmuch that the sun, or heavenly love, no longer shines; the moon, or true faith, is no more; the stars, or the pure truths of the holy word, are lost in the church; and therefore, that a total darkness hath taken place. Then we can easily perceive the predictions of our Lord, which are spiritual, are spiritually fulfilled; and the time is come for him to make his second advent, according to his word and promise.

Much more might be advanced upon this subject, in proof that the Lord's second advent has actually taken place; but until you will admit that

there is a spiritual sense in the word, all that may be said will probably be overlooked by you. Moreover, while you consider the Lord Jesus as a mere man, and we consider him as the only God, it will be next to impossible to convince you that he cannot, by any means, personally appear on the earth, since the perfect glorification of the humanity. If the Lord be only a man, I will admit of his personal appearance again; but if he be God over all, in one divine person, then he will not personally appear. Beside, the kingdom of the Lord is not a temporal, earthly kingdom, but a spiritual and heavenly one. His kingdom is a kingdom of love, goodness, truth, established in the hearts and minds of men; and not an outward, natural one.

Further, you will observe that it is said, *The sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven; they shall see him come in the clouds of heaven*; and, in the next verse it is said, *He shall send his angels, and they shall gather his elect from one end of heaven to the other*; not from one end of the material earth to the other. The *heaven* here meant must consequently be the spiritual world, and not the natural; and when it is said in Rev. xxi. 1, Isa. lxxv. 17, that the first heaven and first earth were passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth formed, we cannot suppose that *heaven itself*, with this earth, are to pass away and be no more; but rather, by heaven and earth, a new kingdom in the heavens, and a new church upon earth. But it is now as it was when our Lord came in the flesh—the Jews had

had blinded their minds by their own traditions, opinions, and errors, so that the true knowledge of the word was lost among them, and they would not receive the instructions of the Lord, that that knowledge might be restored. So the christian world, by the introduction of human inventions, traditions, and false doctrines, have (at least many of them) thrown a veil over the word, and are not willing it should be removed by the bright light of divine truth, now shining upon the world. With an earnest wish that your mind, Sir, and mine, may be more opened to the light of heaven, the genuine truth of the scriptures,

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR,

THE last judgment being of a spiritual nature, and its accomplishment not in the natural world, but in the spiritual, we cannot pretend to ascertain the exact time of its fulfilment, any otherwise than by comparing circumstances in the word with the positive declarations of Emanuel Swedenborg; the truth of whose declarations will

be more or less credited, according to the corroborating evidence of these circumstances, and of his being a messenger from the Lord; together with the knowledge we have of the true sense of scripture. It appears evident to us, independent of Emanuel Swedenborg's assertions, that there have been several general judgments since the beginning of the world, and that there was one at our Lord's first advent. In the Rev. xi. 18, it is said, *The time of the dead is come, that they should be judged; and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.* And immediately follows, a description of a new church, signified by a woman cloathed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, with the persecution of the dragon and serpent; all which chapter evidently respects what was to take place in this world, and all this after the judgment mentioned in the former chapter. And in the latter end of the twentieth chapter there also the judgment is described:—*I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and the dead were judged. And the sea gave up her dead, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to his works, &c. &c.* And immediately after the new heaven and new earth, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is described as coming down from heaven; and we are told who should not enter in, and who should; the unbelieving,

ing, abominable, murderer, whoremonger, &c. are mentioned, even after this general judgment noticed before, which John saw. These, therefore, are sufficient proofs that the judgment must take place before the New Jerusalem descends; and the twenty-first chapter, with the twelfth, prove that this new church, kingdom, or city, was to exist on the earth, because it was to be persecuted, to be in the wilderness, it was to overcome the dragon, serpent, &c.

Thus, Sir, it appears plain, that the judgment was to take place previous to the descent of the Lord's last kingdom and his second advent, which is signified in the third verse of the twenty-first chapter; *The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* As to the exact data of the last judgment is not so very material, it is enough to know that it took place previous to the above things; although there appear many corroborating events and circumstances in this world, and among men, which evince that such an event has taken place. Events these which perhaps Dr. Priestley is not disposed to credit, were we to lay them before him.

As to the *resurrection of the dead*, that is another subject which requires a more ample discussion than I can give it in these Letters. It is an acknowledged truth, that very little concerning the resurrection is said in the Old Testament; but in the New I should think it is fully established, and in my opinion much plainer, and more express by the Lord him-

self, than by the apostle Paul. When the Sadducees came to our Lord, to question him upon this subject, he says, *Now that the dead are raised even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for ALL LIVE unto him, Luke xx. 37, 38.* Here it is plain that all who have died since the creation, are not *still dead*, for the Lord says, *ALL LIVE* unto him. But, Sir, according to your hypothesis, *God* is the God of the *dead*, inasmuch as you suppose all men who have left this world are *ACTUALLY DEAD*, even now, and will so remain many ages yet to come.—And with respect to the penitent thief on the cross, our Lord tells him, *this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Could that be true if his soul and body sleep together unto this day?—Was he, or was he not, with the Lord that day in Paradise? If he was not, what truth was there in the Lord's declaration? If he was, what becomes of your doctrine, that the soul is material, and is dispersed at death, or dies with the body, never more to rise till the world is on fire? And if Paul had these notions, how came he to have such a desire to depart and be with Christ, which he said was far better? But could it be better to die, and be *no more, totally unconscious*, dead, soul and body, till now, seventeen hundred years, and perhaps several hundreds more, before he be with Christ? One would think, if he thought thus, he would have wished to live much longer rather than thus die. [And why did Stephen pray

pray that the Lord would receive his spirit if this is the case]—As to what Paul says, in the long quotation you have given in your fifth Letter, it may for ought I know, be reconciled with our views; but we do not pretend to say that the Epistles have an internal spiritual sense in a regular series, like the word of God. Nor do we call them the *scriptures*; that they are Letters written by wise, good, and illuminated men, we allow.

Our account of marriages in heaven, you say, in *whatever* sense it be understood, is no less contrary to the plain sense of scripture. If, indeed, the end of marriage be *nothing* more than the propagation of the species, as you suggest, then I allow it is not likely there should be any such union in heaven. But if this be the only end of marriage, *that end* is very frequently unanswered, even in the world, as thousands marry and never have any children; and why should old people of fifty, sixty, or seventy, marry at all. But, Sir, I really thought marriage had other important ends, and that our God hath taught us so in his word, when he says, *they twain shall be one flesh*; that the woman is an *help-meet*. And also the apostle teaches us, that *they are to love one the other, even as Christ loved the church*.

It seems, Sir, your views of the conjugal union are very low and imperfect. We think quite differently, and that the great end of marriage is that the man and the woman should be *one* for ever. Not that we say or think it will be so with every

every married pair, but that it ought to be so; for many are connected in that bond who are not united in soul or mind. But with those in whom the union is what God designed it to be, it is an eternal one; an union of soul, of love and delight, beyond all others whatever—and we no more believe death actually separates such pairs, than we do that death puts a final end to the existence of man. We no more believe that natural marriages, for the procreation of children, exist in heaven, than you do: we only mean a spiritual union of minds. But this is not a place for the discussion of that subject.

But, Sir, it is a little curious that you ask, “for what purpose is the difference of sexes, and “what can we mean by conjugal delights in that “state?” (i. e. in the heavenly). My good Sir, do you think that after death men and women will cease to be men and women, and be made hermaphrodites? “The human frame”, you say, “will no “doubt be considerably altered in a state, the purposes of which are so essentially different from “those of the present; so that the same structure “cannot, in all its parts, be adapted to it.”

I could be glad to know, Sir, where you learnt all this curious intelligence. I never before knew that we are not to be the same kind of beings in heaven, as here, as to form, structure, and parts. Really, Sir, this is quite laughable!—there is an uncommon depth of philosophy in it, or an uncommon depth of something else—I will leave others to determine which. You say, “concerning “the

“the particulars of this metamorphosis we can “only form conjectures.” Well, Sir, I will leave those conjectures to you, for I can form none of the kind: I wish to form none—I detest the idea of such changes. Men are men, and women are women; and until God himself tells me they shall be hermaphrodites, I will not believe it—and that, I am sure, will never be. “What do we mean “by conjugal delights in that state?” you ask.—Why, Sir, we mean delights of love, complacency, union or *oneness*, interior spiritual delights. Something like (only much higher, and more exquisite) the delights and happinesses existing in this world between married pairs, who are in true conjugal love to each other; a love stronger than death; a love inexpressible by language; a love that makes them *one*, as *one soul*, *one heart*, *one will*, *one mind*; a love that even here sweetens every bitter, that alleviates every sorrow, that lessens every care, and eases every burden; a love that none know but those who feel it, and a love which those who enjoy it cannot express. And is this union to be broken? this delightful tie to be dissolved? is it to be enjoyed only a few months, or years, in this life, and then cease for ever? Melancholy thought, to the happy, loving pair! But, thank God, we have no ground from either his word or his nature, so to conclude—what God hath joined together let not man put asunder. You say, in this case, we set up the authority of Emanuel Swedenborg against Jesus Christ. No, Sir, no more than we set up the authority of

Dr.

Dr. Priestley against Emanuel Swedenborg. We will believe nothing that Emanuel Swedenborg says that contradicts what our Lord says, any more than you will; but, as yet, we know not that he says any thing contrary to the word of the Lord.

I proceed to your sixth Letter, which (with the seventh) relates chiefly to *metaphysics*; and it appears to me that the principal reason of the difference between you and our author, in that science, is, that he reasons from *causes*, and you from *effects*; therefore, that he reasons in the *light*, and Dr. Priestley in the *dark*: however we allow that metaphysical disquisitions are abstruse, and sometimes difficult—though the less so, as we can enter into *causes* themselves. If you had read (which I presume you have not) Emanuel Swedenborg, his work intitled Angelic Wisdom, on divine love; I am persuaded you would have seen that his metaphysics are as far beyond Locke's, as Locke's are beyond what a school-boy's would be.

It is not my design to enlarge upon this subject, for two reasons, the one is, that it would take up much time and paper; the other is, that I do not think it very necessary here. Nevertheless, I will give my opinion briefly. You object to Emanuel Swedenborg, inasmuch as he says God is love itself, wisdom itself, and life itself, which you think is not intelligible language: but to say he is possessed of love, wisdom, and life, is intelligible language. Really, Sir, I could wish to write a good deal here, although I must forbear. I wonder
what

what you would wish to make God to be. Why is not every man possessed of love, wisdom, and life? Do not the scriptures say that God is *love, wisdom, life*? And is not that the same as what Emanuel Swedenborg says? Doth the adding *itself* to it, make any material difference? It is not barely said that God is *loving*, but that he is *love*; that he is *wise*, but that he is *wisdom*; that he *lives*, but that he is *life*—therefore he is love, wisdom, and life themselves: so that there is no figure in the case. It is a real, plain, and self-evident truth, that God is love itself, wisdom itself, and life itself. Is there any impropriety in saying the sun is *heat itself*, and *light itself*, when we know that it is the only source and fountain, nay, under God, the very origin of natural heat and light? And as that is heat and light, so all heat and light flow therefrom, to us and to every part of this world; and as God is love and wisdom, so all love and wisdom flow from him, the fountain, to intelligent beings. What mystery is there in all this? I see none at all. A child of ten years old may understand it. You say the earth does not in any proper sense exist or subsist from the material sun; they are two independent bodies, which mutually gravitate towards each other. This is *said*, Sir—but not yet proved! Their gravitation I am not disputing. But take away the sun, and then see if this earth, and all things in and upon it, will subsist as before.

You say the doctrine of divine influx is equally unphilosophical. You mean, I suppose, it does not square

square with *your* philosophy. But as you say (and properly) "this is not a place to enter upon the discussion," so neither shall I. But if there be no divine influx, I wonder what we are to do with half the bible; nay, if our life, wisdom, and love do not come from God, where do they come from? and if from God, is it not by influx? or how is it?—I should say, Sir, that "love and wisdom are emanations from God in one conjunctive influx into the soul of man, into his affections and thoughts, and thence into his corporeal senses, speech, and actions." But I by no means wonder at your denying this spiritual influx, inasmuch as you deny the soul to be spiritual, and maintain that it is like the body, *material*.

I cannot, Sir, help noticing the last paragraph in your forty-sixth page, it is so very singular. You there say, "If men be only informed that there is a God who governs the world in righteousness, takes account of our conduct, and that, though we die, he will some time hence raise us to life again, and reward or punish us according as we shall have deserved, we shall have all the knowledge that is necessary for the business of religion. And when ordinary means are sufficient, it is not in the usual plan of providence to have recourse to extraordinary ones." Now, Sir, if just thus much would have been sufficient, why has God done more than this? Did not the Old Testament tell us there is a God who governs the world in righteousness, &c.? Beside, if this be all, what need
of

of Christ, redemption, the gospel, and the like? and all the extraordinary means which God hath used at different times? Really, Sir, this is strange doctrine for a christian to maintain. You add, "If men will not hear Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, neither will they regard the visions of Mr. Swedenborg, &c." I hope this is very true, Sir, for we do not wish men who pay no regard to the former, to have any thing to do with the latter; but we believe the *more* they truly regard the former, the more they will, ere long, attend to the latter, although there may be no particular intimation that the *identical Emanuel Swedenborg* was to succeed them.

All that you say against angels dwelling in the affections of men, I need not notice here, as it seems to arise from a mistaken view you have conceived of the subject, the discussion of which is not of great importance here; and as to what you observe about space and time, in relation to God, this is a disquisition which cannot be made in these Letters, except I meant to extend them to a volume; such subjects being abstruse and requiring much reasoning. But why it should be so great a puzzle, that the Divine Being, who is wisdom, love, and life, has a *form*, I cannot conceive.—Is God a *being*? If he is, he must have some *form*—Do we know, or can we conceive, of a being that has no *form*? When you address God, do you address any thing or nothing? Do you not conceive of him as having some form; and can you conceive of him in any other form

form than what resembles the *human*?—And why is this degrading to the Divine Being?—What has this no countenance from scripture or reason?—Can your reason form an idea of God in any better form, or in any other form? I should suppose not. But let me recollect myself, you say, “according to the “uniform language of scripture, God is equally and “every where present; and if so, what form can “he possibly have? It can be nothing but that of “infinite space.” I really think, Sir, your notions of the divine form, are more like Addison’s apparition, in the shape of the *sound of a drum*, than ours are.—The absurdity of supposing the form of God to be that of infinite space, is so manifest and ridiculous, that I am truly surprized at the Doctor.

The questions you ask in your fifty-first page, are so indelicate and improper, when speaking in public of the Divine Being, that I am really ashamed to take any notice of them.—And as to your saying “to give to God the form of man, is to assign “him all the functions of man, and a mode of life “similar to man;” is, Sir, merely to make the subject appear absurd, without any just reason. What do you think of angels? Are they in the form of men? And if they are, do you allow them all the same functions, and mode of life, with man? I imagine not. And if they have, that is no proof that it must be the same with the Divine Being.

Wishing, Sir, that you may form more rational ideas of the great Jehovah,

I am, yours, &c,

LETTER

LETTER VII.

REV. SIR,

I COME now to make a few *general* remarks upon your seventh Letter; and as to all you say about *space*, I shall pass over with only observing, that Emanuel Swedenborg frequently says, that there is the appearance of space in the spiritual world, but not real space, like what is in the natural; however, you are quite at liberty to think about this matter as you please; it is of no material consequence as I know of, to us in the present case. But if God be a Being, and his form what you suggested in your other Letter, I should suppose there can be no space at all, either in this world, or any other—for if his form be infinite space, then infinite space must be *God*—and there is an end of the matter.

As to Emanuel Swedenborg's seeing Beings in the form of men, and also seeing animals, hills, valleys, &c. is all this any more wonderful than what several of the prophets saw, and John the Revelater also? Compare one with the other, and see if the latter may not be called waking dreams as well as the former.

But, Sir, what you say about the spiritual sense of the scriptures, must not be lightly passed over. You suggest that the sacred writings have no other

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meaning

meaning than that which appears on the face of the letter, and if other sense be admitted, there is no end of diversity of opinion. Now, if this be actually the case, that the scriptures have no other meaning or sense than what appears on the face of the letter, I beg leave to ask how we are to understand half the prophetic writings? the revelations of St. John? and, indeed, numberless places in the word? For example, I will mention two or three:—

Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the King of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sum full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee, in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth: and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, Ezek. xxviii. 12, 13, 14. I beheld the earth, and lo it was without form, and void; and the heavens and they had no light; I beheld the mountains, and lo they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly; I beheld, and lo there was no man; and all the birds of the heavens were fled, Jer. iv. 23, 24, 25. See also Isa. xxxiv. 1 to the end. I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come, Matt. x. 23.—
Now, Sir, what will you make of these, and numberless

less other places, if you only judge of them by the letter? I should think you can make nothing at all of them in that way. If you say, they are figurative expressions—pray what are they figures of? For me to say, the word is of God, and therefore must be spiritual; perhaps that would not satisfy you—for it is a query with me whether you think God is spiritual or not: however, *we* think he is, and that his word is like himself, viz. spiritual also; that it is *spirit and life*, as Jesus says; and that there is, in every part of it, a spiritual sense within the literal. But, you say, “If other senses be admitted there is no end of diversity of opinion; every person will, of course, think himself at liberty to form his own conjectures.” I allow, Sir, if men only conjecture about the spiritual sense of scripture, there may be no end of diversity of opinion; which has been too much the case for ages past. But this will not apply to what we maintain, about the internal or spiritual sense—for that sense known, will be so far from creating diversity of opinion, that it will actually cause every one to think alike; for the true spiritual sense of the holy word is known by the *science of correspondences*, that science being as a key to the scriptures; and, being acquainted therewith, we cannot mistake the true sense of these sacred pages—so that a greater diversity of opinion will not ensue, but the very reverse; every one will be of one faith, one opinion, one mind, as I have noticed in a former Letter.

I well know, Sir, that with all your learning, philosophy, and divinity, there are many parts of the holy word that you cannot explain, that you know not the genuine meaning of; and which, I am persuaded, you will acknowledge. And I am willing to own it was so with myself, perhaps much more so than with you, before I became in some degree acquainted with that science in which the holy word is written.

For you to object to it, and explode it, before you are acquainted with it, is, Sir, very unbecoming, and exceedingly wrong. You say, "What evidence do we give of this being the case?" Why, Sir, what evidence would you have more than the thing itself. Suppose I had looked into your Elaboratory, and saw only a number of vessels of different sorts and sizes, and you had said to me, "In all those vessels there are certain kinds of liquor;" and I had said, "Sir, I do not see it—" "what evidence do you give me that it is so?" Would you not either shew me the contents yourself, or desire me to examine them for my own conviction? Doubtless, you would do one, or the other. Now, Sir, in the present case, I am willing either of these, or both of them, be done for your conviction: but it is not very likely that I can do it in these Letters, as I must transcribe so *much of the word*, and then give the spiritual sense. But have I not, in a former Letter, proved how impossible it is to understand the word without such a spiritual meaning? Can we suppose the *sacred word*

word of the Almighty would abound in trees, herbs, houses, hills, valleys, mountains, gold, silver, brass, horses, chariots, beasts of every kind, birds of every wing, serpents, dragons, locusts, suns, moons, stars, clouds, cities, towns, villages, walls, stones, gates, and a thousand other similar things, if there was not a spiritual and divine meaning included in them? And doth not this fully prove that it is *written by correspondences*? that those things must correspond to something spiritual? and can we know what those spiritual things are, unless we have some rule to go by in explaining those corresponding figures? If men have lost the knowledge of that rule, and it is now made known again, shall we not be willing to acquaint ourselves with it? or shall we persist in saying there is no such rule, and we will follow our own conjectures? However, Sir, I hope, and I believe, that your opposition to these things, and to our doctrines, manifested in this public manner, will excite thousands to examine for themselves, to read the writings we have recommended, and be the means of their more extensive acquaintance with the holy word of the Lord.

I will now come to your eighth, and last Letter, in the beginning of which you appeal to our reason, "whether the religion we have adopted, "upon the authority of one man, be either rational "or scriptural;" you add, "we well know that a "faith not founded on evidence (of which our own "reason is the only judge) is nothing but delusion."

We say, Sir, the religion we have adopted, rests not upon the authority of *one man*; but upon the unmoveable basis of the scriptures, the divine authority of the Lord our God. Every doctrine we maintain is, we conceive, founded on the word. As far as our reason is capable of judging, we believe divine truth is the *standard of our faith*. But we further believe that Emanuel Swedenborg has been made an instrument, under God, to remove those clouds which the traditions and doctrines of men had thrown over that holy book; and the more we study the truths of that book, the more rationally are we convinced that this is true. As to your believing that his accounts of what he saw and heard in the spiritual world, are mere *inventions*; this does not affect us, or our doctrines. You are welcome to believe what you please, we believe they are no more inventions than Daniel's, Ezekiel's, or the Revelater's; and that there is neither enthusiasm nor imposture in them. However, let us agree to judge of these things as our reason may incline us. But when you say there is sufficient evidence that it was not the spirit of truth that dictated his writings, we must say *that* sufficient evidence has not been given us as yet.

You say, "Should any being, in the complete form of an angel, tell you that God had the form of a man, that this God was Jesus Christ, that he was not to return to this world to raise the dead and judge mankind, that there are marriages in heaven, &c. you would tell him
" he

"he was a *lying spirit*, and that what he told you
 "could not be true, since both reason and the scrip-
 "tures, much better authorities than an angel, told
 "you the contrary."

I thank you, Sir, for this open confession;
 and I care not if it spreads all over Europe, that
 the nations may know what Dr. Priestley believes,
 and be the more guarded against the subtilty of his
 writings. Suppose, Sir, to make the matter as
 plain as we can, I should, from what you do not
 believe, just mention what you do believe, or change
 your negative into a positive; then perhaps it will
 run thus:—Dr. Priestley believes that God has no
 human form, but that he is in the form of *infinite*
space; that Jesus Christ is only a *mere man*, like
 Isaiah or Peter; that as a man he will some day
 ride upon a vapory cloud; stand upon this globe
 of earth, and judge the world; raise all dead bo-
 dies; and that men and women in heaven will
 not live in conjugal union, felicity, and happiness,
 but be changed from their present construction,
 and made a kind of *hermaphrodites*!!! Well, Sir,
 I will say, in your own words, if a being in the
 complete form of an angel, was to tell me all this,
 I would tell him he was a *lying spirit*, since reason
 and the scriptures, much better authorities, tell me
 the contrary.

Well now, Sir, I will for a moment confi-
 der the creed you have been kind enough to re-
 commend to us. But first let me tell you, "that
 "we will believe no man (no not Dr. Priestley)

“ contradiction to our own reason, and the clear sense
 “ of scripture.” This is your creed, as follows :—
 “ There is one God, of whose *essence* we know no-
 “ thing at all : he is invisible, and not the object
 “ of any of our senses, but he is the maker and
 “ constant preserver of all things. This *great Be-*
 “ *ing* (I suppose in allusion to his form being that
 “ of *infinite space*) has at different times commis-
 “ sioned various men, and especially Jesus Christ,
 “ to communicate his will to mankind, and he al-
 “ ways sanctioned their missions by the power of
 “ working miracles, or doing such things as no man
 “ could have done, if God had not been with him.
 “ By this means (or *these* means rather) we have
 “ been informed concerning our duty here, and our
 “ expectations hereafter ; and especially that Christ,
 “ who rose from the dead, and is ascended into hea-
 “ ven, will return with power and great glory,
 “ when all the dead will be raised, and all the liv-
 “ ing so changed, as to be like them incorruptible
 “ and immortal ; and when they will all receive
 “ according to their works.”

This, Sir, is the creed you advise us to ; but
 as we cannot, upon mature deliberation, adopt it,
 you must excuse us :—presently I may give you a
counter one, though I do not imagine you will adopt
that. You say, “ we know nothing at all of God’s
 “ essence ;” then I should think we know very
 little, if any thing at all, of God himself. You
 will say, “ It may be ; yes, we may know him by
 “ his works, his providence, and word.” True,
 Sir,

Sir, but they tell us also something of his *essence*—However, we will let this pass. Then as to Jesus Christ being sent like other men, and being no more than other men, this will not go down with us; nor the manner of his returning, and the work then to be done:—therefore we must reject your creed, for the present, rational, simple, and easy as you suppose it. We allow the authenticity of the history of Moses, the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and believe no man's mere assertion, without sufficient evidence. We cannot withdraw our implicit faith in a man who gave no *proof* of his inspiration, and whose opinions are wholly unsupported by reason, and the plain sense of scripture—because we have *no such implicit faith in any such man*, therefore we cannot withdraw it; although you say we should then be what other unitarians are—for really we hope we never shall be such.

As to your easily conceiving in what manner the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg was led to form his peculiar ideas concerning the person of Christ, as it is only your conception, and we are persuaded a very wrong one, we will leave you to indulge it. The long paragraph in your sixty-third page, contains conclusions drawn from such false premises, that to discuss it, would only be to go over the ground we have gone before, and lengthen this reply unnecessarily. It is plain you do not understand Emanuel Swedenborg, or us, respecting the union of the humanity with the divinity, or you could not have drawn the conclusions you have there done.

You

You say, "we make the belief of the sole divinity of Christ to be necessary to salvation:"—this I have answered before. Therefore to say "we want to frighten people into our system," is, Sir, too unfair. You must know we want to do no such thing; we detest the idea of it—we neither wish to frighten, or force any one—we only wish them to be rationally and scripturally convicted;—and therefore in *charity*, Sir, *you* have no advantage over us. I will not say we have *more* than you, because that very declaration might be construed as a proof of uncharitableness—so we will leave that to be determined at a future day. We as much hope to meet you and your followers, as you hope to meet us in the heavenly world; and I might say of you, as you say of us, that when you see what you will then be immediately witnesses to, all the notions you cherish so fondly at present will vanish like a dream; and as to the consequences of them I will leave. In the mean time, I wish you a sensible and rational faith, a faith that you can comprehend, and give a reason for—for, in all cases, truth is preferable to error. That you wrote your Letters in love, I will not dispute—for your good wishes we are obliged—and we return them, by wishing you, and all that espouse your sentiments, may be led into the pure and genuine truth of the Lord's holy word.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR,

HAVING gone through the whole of your Letters, and as your Appendix is nothing more than a few extracts from Emanuel Swedenborg's writings, I need not make any observations thereupon. I shall, therefore conclude, by a short, but serious, address to you—those who espouse your views—and such as at present do not receive the doctrines we maintain.

We must all allow that it is of very great importance for us, rationally and scripturally, to know the God we worship and serve.—An idea of this God being in the form of infinite space, is so vague and undeterminate, that it can yield us no satisfaction at all. We know the scriptures frequently declare that his servants shall be *with him, see his face—behold him as he is—dwell in his presence—be like him, &c.* Now all this plainly implies that the Divine Being is both a form and substance; for what has neither form nor substance, we cannot see. And would it not be preposterous to suppose we should see God in any other form than what resembles the human? And what difficulty is there in believing that this blessed God hath united the humanity with his divinity, since he is called, and really is, both
God

God and Man in one divine person. Is there any greater mystery in the Almighty's clothing himself (if I may use that word) with a divine humanity, than in his clothing our souls with a material body? Was not God manifest in the flesh, our Emanuel, or God with us? And is it not a most rational, pleasing, and scriptural idea, that God will be thus visible to us for ever and ever? But, if the Almighty be a Being without form or substance, we can no more see him in the heavenly state, than we can now. And what an absurdity it is to suppose a *Being* can exist without *substance or form*.—Is it possible to form any idea of such a Being?

And can any thing be more plain than the scriptures I have adduced in proof that the one Jehovah is the only Saviour—that the Lord Jesus Christ is that one Jehovah—and that, consequently, he is the only God of heaven and earth?—Is there any peculiar mystery in all this? Can we possibly reconcile the scriptures in any other way than this? Why then should we be so unwilling to acknowledge him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the only God, when all the bible uniformly tells us so? Or, why should we wish to find more gods than this one God? And is it not truly awful and iniquitous to say, that the worship of the Lord and Saviour is gross idolatry, a great abomination? Reconsider this matter—think deeply upon it—least ye are found fighting against God. You must know that in many places of the holy word, divine worship is given to the Lord Jesus—and if all the angels in heaven wor-
ship

ship him, why should not we? He is all that which I have declared in my fourth Letter—He is therefore the true God and eternal life—the I AM—the Alpha and Omega—the Almighty—the only wise God—He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent—He is every thing that a God can be—He is the only God, and, strictly speaking, the only man; as all mankind are men, from him, in consequence of being made like him.

My christian friends, this subject is of *vast moment; of the utmost importance*; and I do earnestly intreat you to consider it well. Suppose, for a moment, that you may have been mistaken in this point, and therefore look up to the Lord for illumination. The grand essentials of our holy religion are, to know and worship the *true* God—to love him with all the heart—keep his commandments—and love one another as we love ourselves. I am sure, if I know any thing of my own heart, I value you, I love you (although you differ so much from me) as much as I love those who think as I do: I as much wish your welfare and happiness. And I am not condemning any of you; you may be in the good of life, much more than many others, perhaps much more than myself—I wish you also to be in the truth of doctrine. To own and worship him whom angels own and worship, as the true God. And if you cannot be prevailed upon so to do, I must leave it, and love you still.

You

You allow the scriptures to be the word of the eternal Jehovah. Why then should you think they are not spiritual and divine throughout. Can you understand a great part of them, except you admit a spiritual sense. I think you will own you cannot. Have not many prophets, and the Lord himself, declared that there shall be a more glorious day than we have yet seen? Why may it not be at hand? What is the reason, that in allusion to that time, he so frequently declares that they shall then *know the Lord*—there shall be one Lord (Jehovah) and his name one—that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, &c. &c. Has not the Lord, in all dispensations, opened still further and further the divine things of his kingdom? We know he hath.—What is the meaning of an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, *Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come?* &c. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. What does this mean, but to further open divine truth to men, by taking off the veil and clouds men have thrown over it, and opening the true spiritual sense of that holy book, for the instruction and happiness of men in these last days? Need we wonder then, that many things relative to the spiritual and eternal world are now made manifest. Compare the doctrines and truths which we now maintain, with those espoused by
different

different denominations of christians, and bring them to the test of reason and scripture, that you may judge for yourselves.

We do not wish you to receive them upon our word or recommendation, but to read for yourselves; examine the writings of the Hon. Baron, deliberately, and with an unprejudiced mind, and then make judgment. If they appear irrational—not founded upon divine truth, reject them; if they appear rational, scriptural, and sound, receive them. We only wish every one to read and hear for themselves. And we verily believe the means which *individuals* are taking to prevent their being read and received, will only induce many, very many, more to read and examine for themselves. This is all we wish. We want them to be brought to the light of reason and scripture, and let them stand or fall according as they agree with, or are contrary to, that test. Be not dissuaded by what any man may say, from using your own liberty and freedom. Do by these writings as you would do by any new author in religious things, viz. Give them a fair hearing.

We profess, that they inculcate the knowledge and worship of the true God—that they lead us to the knowledge of the holy word in its true spiritual sense—the more we read those writings, the more we value, venerate, and love the holy word of the Lord. They inculcate the love of God—charity to mankind—and an obedience to all divine commands.

mands. We are hereby convinced from the word, that the second advent of the Lord is commenced; that he is come in the glory and power of his own divine word and kingdom, to establish a church, which shall be the crown of all others, and stand for ever. And we believe, that serious and pious christians of all denominations, will soon receive him, and rejoice in his name and kingdom.

Christianity met with much opposition at first, but it spread, and gained ground in spite of all opposition. Though Jesus was accounted a madman, an impostor, a devil, and his apostles were all supposed to be deluded enthusiasts, nevertheless, truth prevailed. So it will be now; and although Emanuel Swedenborg is esteemed an impostor, a visionary, a deluded enthusiast, and every thing that is mean; and his followers are men of worse imaginations, shallow judgment, easily imposed upon, weak men, and awfully deceived; yet, Sirs, truth will gain ground in spite of all these odiums upon its receivers. It does gain ground very fast, and that stirs up many to oppose, though they may do it from zeal, and sincere intentions. Every opposition it meets with will only tend to confirm its receivers, and increase its spread: the work is of God, and it cannot be overthrown.

And as to you, Rev. Sir, I sincerely wish your ideas may become more spiritual; that your natural philosophy may lead you to a more spiritual and heavenly divinity; and not to conceive that the
soul

soul is mere matter, the holy word merely literal, and the God of the word like infinite space.

When you conceive God to be what he is—the soul to be what it is—and the scriptures to be what they *are*—then your ideas will be more spiritual and expanded; but, I presume, not before. However, Sir, be this as it may, I do assure you my only desire is, that we may all be in the truth—live a life of goodness—meet together in heaven—and be happy for ever.

I have replied to your Letters in real good nature and christian affection; and I shall be sorry if there be one word in them that may be construed as a proof of being unfair, illiberal, or unbecoming. I have not the most distant desire of offending you, or any man, and hope here is nothing that can give just offence. I have given you my thoughts, freely, as I thought it right to answer you: but, as I said before, controversy and disputations I am not fond of, nor do I think in general, they do much good. And, therefore, I take the liberty of assuring you, that should you write again, or ever so often, upon these subjects, my determination, at present is, to make no more reply. I have neither time, nor inclination, to be engaged in such debates; and, what is more, I fear it is generally time poorly spent; not answering that great end we all ought to have in view, viz. To be *truly useful* to the utmost of our power. You may think that the discussion of religious sentiments in

this literary way, is calculated for much good—to open the minds of men—and inform their judgment. But, Sir, I fear this is too seldom the case by such controversies.

I remain, with cordial esteem and affection; wishing you an increase of all that knowledge; wisdom, truth, and goodness, that is necessary to make you extensively useful to mankind through life; and solidly happy in your own mind through time, and to all eternity.

And am, Rev. Sir,

Your real friend and well-wisher,

J. PROUD.

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